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**VIETNAM**

## SUCCESS STORY

# Better Pay, Better Future For Apprentice

**Training gives disabled people, ethnic minorities more job opportunities**



Photo: USAID/Vietnam/Richard Nyberg

A Kha learns the carpentry trade and discovers a path out of poverty through a USAID-funded apprenticeship in Kon Tum, Vietnam.

***“This job makes more money for me than farming. Five years from now, I will be making furniture,” said A Kha, a furniture apprentice in Vietnam’s Central Highlands.***

A Kha had a hard time understanding the question about his pay, perhaps because his native language, Hmong, has no precise word for “income”. Or perhaps it was because the 17-year-old rice farmer from Daklong commune, Village 7, had never earned much of one.

Just a few months in the provincial capital of Kon Tum, 62 kilometers (38 miles) from his home in the green mountainous countryside of Vietnam’s Central Highlands, he began to understand what it means to earn more money, to save, and to send precious cash back to his parents, brother and two sisters.

Through a USAID-sponsored apprenticeship, he is building a better future — in a furniture factory. He trekked to Kon Tum after one of the 19 trained community support workers told him of the opportunity to learn carpentry and continue on full-time if he demonstrated his abilities during his months of training. A Kha stays on task, squatting on the floor of the Duc Nhan Furniture Company with hammer and glue close at hand as he assembles pieces of smooth wood into patio tables and chairs destined for European gardens.

“I like working here,” he said. “This job makes more money for me than farming. Five years from now, I will be making furniture.” People from Village 7 are curious about this new program and his recent success. “People like what they hear about my training. Already six of my friends have asked how they can sign up,” A Kha said.

Kon Tum and four other Central Highlands provinces are the poorest in Vietnam. On almost every development indicator, the Central Highlands region is below average — and its ethnic minorities are the most disadvantaged population groups.

Since 2005, USAID has worked in this region to increase opportunities for education and greater income for ethnic minorities and other disadvantaged groups. This project will directly benefit 140 young people with disabilities and ethnic minorities by helping them gain skills, increase their income, improve their health conditions and become more active socially.

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